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Short Subjects -- Psychology

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Short Subjects — Psychology

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Editors Note: This is a NEW COLUMN delineating particular disciplines in detail. What do you think of it? Is it helpful? We are doing collection analyses at the College of Charleston and I found it incredibly helpful with that exercise. — KS

Using information pulled from YBP's database of titles handled on approval, we plan to write a series of short reference articles that examine trends in academic publishing. Each article will focus on a single subject area and combine pricing information with analysis of the subject.

Subject Area: What is Psychology?

In order to reflect their own strengths, publishers will define a given discipline in various ways. In this they both influence and are influenced by readers who are also scholars and authors. Together they define a discipline's scope and terminology.

A quick glance through publishers' catalogs is enough to show that Psychology can be approached in a number of ways. The following table shows how four major publishers have organized the broad topic of Psychology in recent catalogs. The table also shows major divisions within Library of Congress classification schedule BF Psychology.

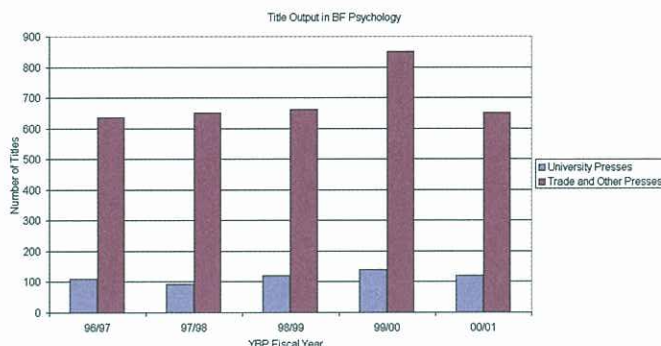
Psychology Subtopics

Publisher	Subtopics
American Psychological Association Book Catalog	Addictions, Children, Children at Risk, Clinical and Psychotherapy, Cognition, Development, Education and Learning, Ethics, Experimental, Gender, Health, Law and Mental Health, Law and Psychology, Methodology and Testing, Personality and Social Psychology, Psychoanalysis, Religion and Spirituality, Tools for Teachers, Violence
Harvard University Press	Cognitive Psychology, Linguistics, and Neuroscience; Cultural, Developmental, and Social Psychology; General Topics; Psychiatry, and Psychoanalysis
Kluwer Academic Publishers	Neuroscience, Forensic Psychology and Criminology, Social and Clinical Psychology
Sage	Human Development, Social Psychology, Discourse Analysis, Research Methods, Social Construction
Library of Congress BF Psychology Schedule	Psychoanalysis, Experimental Psychology, Sensation, Cognition, Motivation, Emotion, Will/choice, Applied Psychology, Genetic Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Child Psychology, Temperament, Physiognomy, Phrenology, Graphology

Titles pertaining to Psychology appear in a wide range of LC subclasses as well. Last year, for example, of the 50 American Psychological Association titles profiled by YBP, the Library of Congress classified only 13 in BF, while classifying 24 as RC Internal Medicine. Other titles dealing with Psychology may be primarily about education, business, sociology, or religion, or another field. For the

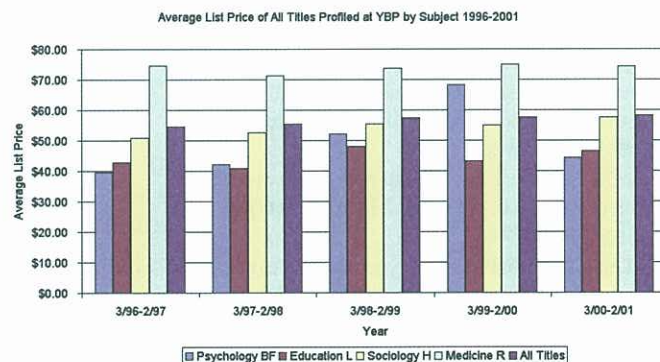
sake of clarity, however, this discussion will focus on titles assigned to the Library of Congress subclass BF Psychology.

Title Output



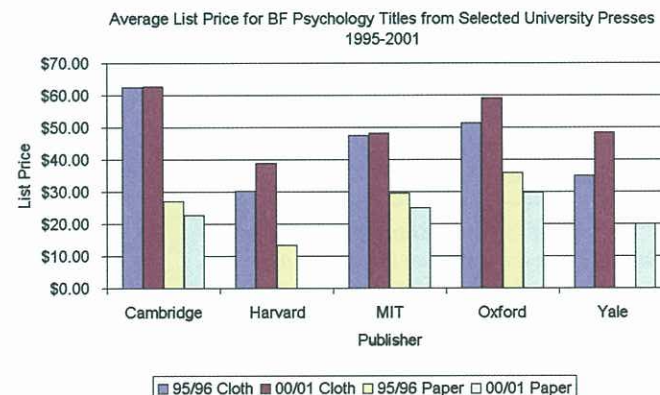
Title output in BF has remained fairly level over the past five years, increasing only 3% from 745 titles in a 12 month period in 96/97 to 771 titles during the same period in 00/01. BF Psychology titles amount to approximately 1.5% of all titles profiled at YBP. (The 99/00 output was artificially high due to a 204-volume set of reprints from Routledge.) University presses account for a relatively small part of the BF Psychology universe, about 18% annually.

Prices



The average list price for Psychology titles is considerably lower than that for all titles. (The increase in 99/00 was due to the large Routledge set mentioned above.)

The following chart depicts average list prices in BF Psychology for the five university presses most active in the discipline over the past five years.

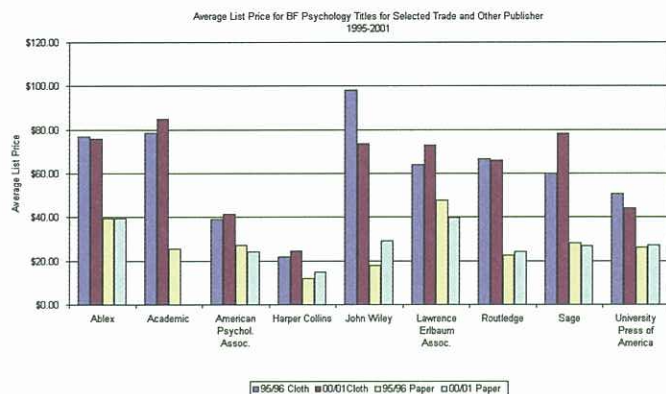


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The average price of paper editions decreased about 15% between 1995 and 2001 for the presses surveyed, while cloth prices stayed the same or increased. The pricing patterns represented here may reflect the struggle most university presses have had finding a pricing strategy that maximizes sales and protects their margins. (Each press published at least six titles in the given years. YBP did not profile any paperback titles in BF Psychology from Harvard during the 2000-2001 period; likewise for Yale in 1995-1996.)

The chart below illustrates how some other publishers priced their Psychology titles during the same periods.



For the most part, the average list price of hardcover Psychology titles remained about the same or increased among trade and other publishers. The exceptions were John Wiley and University Press of America. In the case of Wiley, the average list price for 1995-96 was unusually high because they published three volumes priced over \$150. The prices of paper editions did not follow a consistent trend among this group of publishers. Prices went up for four publishers, dropped for two and remained about the same for two.

Sage, Cambridge, and Routledge publish paper and cloth editions simultaneously for about 75% of the titles they publish in Psychology giving consumers some control over their expenditures in this subject area. This is also true for just over half of Lawrence Erlbaum titles in BF Psychology.

In cases where publishers do choose to publish cloth and paper editions simultaneously, the cloth can be more than twice as expensive as paper. One large publisher explains that its strategy is to produce low price paper editions to encourage course adoption. The publisher believes once a title is adopted, libraries will have to purchase hardcover reserve copies. The publisher relies heavily on the hardcover sales to meet its margins. Price experimentation has confirmed that hardcover prices can be up to three times higher than paper prices without hurting sales. Though this is not unique to Psychology it may be more prevalent due to the popularity of the subject among undergraduates.

Major Bibliographic Characteristics

YBP bibliographers categorize about 25% of all BF Psychology titles as "Popular" in YBP's system of content levels, while only 13% of all titles are in this category. These Psychology titles would include, for example, many self-help books. YBP's "General-Academic" level titles accessible to all undergraduates, and the "Professional" level titles geared toward practicing psychologists or counselors, also show BF Psychology totals to be below the YBP average for all subjects.

Academic Levels of BF Psychology Titles Profiled by YBP 2000/2001

Level	% of BF Titles	% of All Titles
Popular	25%	13%
General Academic	23%	30%
Advanced Academic	44%	44%
Professional	8%	13%

Other bibliographic characteristics that may influence acquisition decisions are detailed in the table below. Most notable, perhaps, is the relatively high percentage of textbooks in BF Psychology, a format of limited interest to libraries.

Bibliographic Characteristics of BF Psychology Titles Profiled by YBP 2000/2001

Characteristic	% of BF Titles Profiled	% of All Titles Profiled
Textbook	14%	9%
Collections	14%	15%
Based on a Conference	6%	7%
Handbook	2%	3%
Numbered Series	6%	11%
Unnumbered Series	18%	20%
UK Publisher	20%	20%
Biography	1%	3%
History	10%	25%

Best Selling Titles

A look at the best selling titles list reveals some of the hot topics in Psychology today. Works relating to the origins of consciousness, cognition and brain development are particularly popular. Titles about sex or the differences between the sexes consistently sell well. Few books that outline the business applications for psychology are classified in BF Psychology. However, some that are sell particularly well. *The Psychology of the Internet* is a good example. In addition to these perennial favorites, hot topics come and go. The subject of memory dominated publishers' lists in 2000, and in 1998, five of the top ten titles in BF Psychology were about intelligence.

Best Selling Titles in BF Psychology for YBP 1995-2000

- Wallace, Patricia. *Psychology of the Internet*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999. 0521632943. \$24.95.
- Gardner, Howard. *Intelligence Reframed: Multiple Intelligences for the 21st Century*. Basic Books, 1999. 0465026109. \$18.50.
- Katz, Jack. *How Emotions Work*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1999. 0226425991. \$27.50.
- Spitz, Ellen Handler. *Inside Picture Books*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1999. 0300076029. \$30.00.
- Kimura, Doreen. *Sex and Cognition*. Cambridge: MIT Press, 1999. 0262112361. \$42.00.
- Bruer, John T. *The Myth of the First Three Years: A New Understanding of Early Brain Development and Lifelong Learning*. New York: Free Press, 1999. 0684851849. \$25.00.
- Davidman, Lynn. *Motherloss*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000. 0520223195. \$24.95.
- Damasio, Antonio R. *Feeling of What Happens: Body and Emotion in the Making of Consciousness*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace, 1999. 0151003696. \$28.00.
- Townsend, John Marshall. *What Women Want-What Men Want: Why the Sexes Still See Love and Commitment So Differently*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998. 0195114884. \$25.00.
- Lutz, Tom. *Crying: The Natural and Cultural History of Tears*. New York: W.W. Norton, 1999. 0393047563. \$25.95.